

Donna Eastman for her years of leadership and service to the people of Callender. I consider it an honor to represent her in the United States Congress and I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

HONORING TWO-TIME STATE
CHAMPION IOTA LADY BULLDOGS

HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Iota Lady Bulldogs basketball team, who again finished their season with a state championship after defeating Capitol 60–49 in strong fashion.

The March 1st win capped the season for Iota, who finished with an impressive 36–4 record. Even more remarkable, the Lady Bulldogs competed in the larger Class AAA for the first time. Capitol had previously dominated the class with five championships in the past 7 years. Over the course of their career, Iota's senior class won an impressive 225 games.

Madam Speaker, as a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, I applaud these student athletes who demonstrated a strong work ethic, determination, and teamwork. The people of Iota share their pride in this team and each of these girls who continue to play so admirably.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the two-time champion Iota Lady Bulldogs for their latest achievement.

CALLING FOR PASSAGE OF THE
FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, two recent events make it clear—the time has come for Congress to enact a Federal media shield.

Yesterday, the House passed legislation to create an independent ethics panel with the stated purpose of holding Members of Congress accountable to the highest ethical standard. Our Founders would have scoffed at the notion that a political panel, appointed by politicians, could hold the national legislature accountable. Our Founders knew the only agency in society with the power to hold the national government accountable is a free and independent press.

Last year, the House acknowledged this fact and passed the Free Flow of Information Act, creating a Federal media shield, with overwhelming bipartisan support. That bill now awaits action by the full Senate. The need for action by the Senate is also evident with the news that another reporter is facing court sanctions based on her unwillingness to disclose confidential sources.

Former USA Today reporter Toni Locy is facing financial ruin as the result of a ruling that she must pay fines that will escalate to up to \$5,000 per day unless she discloses her confidential sources for stories she wrote about the 2001 anthrax attacks. Her case and

the need for greater ethics scrutiny in Congress argue forcefully for the need for a Federal media shield statute.

The one, time-tested way of holding the Government accountable is ensuring the free flow of information to the American people. Threatening reporters or creating an ethics panel of politicians to police politicians will not do it.

Congress must enact a Federal media shield to ensure that those charged with the duty of holding Government accountable have the freedom and independence to do just that.

It is time for the Senate to vote on the Free Flow of Information Act.

PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL
HEALTH AND ADDICTION EQUITY
ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. This legislation is named in tribute to Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone, whose work on behalf of the vulnerable was well known and well respected.

I also rise to thank my colleague from Minnesota, Congressman JIM RAMSTAD, for continuing Senator Wellstone's fight on behalf of those who the stigma too often attached to the issues of mental health and substance abuse has left voiceless. Mr. RAMSTAD's courage in sharing his experience with substance abuse and his dedication to passage of this legislation is the reason we are here today. This bill will help end the pattern of senseless and immoral discrimination against those suffering from mental illness and put to rest the outdated notion that these challenges are less legitimate or severe than physical ailments.

Mental illness left untreated affects all facets of our society and costs our economy over \$150 billion annually. Mental illness affects 50 percent of the homeless population in Minnesota, 70 percent of those in our juvenile justice system, and those with the highest unemployment rates. Health care costs double when diabetes and heart disease patients have co-morbid depression, and patients with mental illness and substance abuse disorders are often less responsive to treatment.

In addition, the burden that mental illness places upon the health and productivity of our Nation has long been underestimated. One in five adults and one in ten children have a mental illness. And over one-third of our returning servicemembers from Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from mental health problems.

The costs of untreated substance abuse are also high for families and our health care system. Studies have shown that 1 in every 5 Medicaid dollars spent on hospital care is related to substance abuse; health care costs for those dependent on drugs or alcohol is 100 percent higher than those without an addiction; and the costs to law enforcement and to employers are significant. Treatment makes a difference. A recent study showed that after treatment, family health care costs dropped 50 percent.

H.R. 1424 requires parity with co-payments, deductibles, and out-of-pocket expenses, and requires that limits on mental health and addiction care are no more restrictive than those on physical health. This legislation requires equality in out-of-network care and ensures coverage for mental illness and substance related disorders included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM.

It is time to pass this bill. We have all been affected in some way—ourselves, a family member, a friend, or colleague—by mental health or substance abuse. As we look to reform our health care system, mental health and physical care can no longer be looked at as separate entities. It is morally right and good for both our economy and our health care system. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this important bill.

HONORING THE OCCASION OF THE
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EU-
ROPEAN PARLIAMENT

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the creation of the European Parliament.

As chair of the U.S. delegation of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue, I would like to congratulate the European Parliament on its remarkable evolution. Fifty years ago, it was a small assembly with non-elected members, just four official languages, and only consultative powers; today it is a directly elected parliament with members speaking 23 languages, wide decisionmaking powers over legislation and budgeting, as well as control and scrutiny of the European Commission. The Lisbon Treaty, which is currently awaiting ratification, could enlarge the powers of the European Parliament even further.

Members of the European Parliament have also broadened their sphere of influence beyond domestic European affairs, engaging vigorously in our Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue. That dialogue has contributed to bringing the European Union and the United States closer together and continues to be of utmost importance, enhancing national security and stimulating economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic. The Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue has held bi-annual interparliamentary meetings since 1972, when a U.S. congressional delegation visited the European Parliament for the first time. Over 60 meetings later, I am proud to have played a role in enhancing and strengthening the ties between the European Union and the United States.

As a long-time advocate of transatlantic relations, I was delighted to host our latest interparliamentary meeting this past October in Las Vegas. During our meeting, we discussed a number of important transatlantic issues, including regulatory initiatives under the Transatlantic Economic Council, the rise of global anti-Semitism, and foreign policy challenges, such as the Middle East, Kosovo, Russia, and China.

I look forward to continuing our transatlantic dialogue at the next TLD meeting—in Ljubljana, Slovenia in May—and to continue following the future development of the European Union. Fifty years after its birth, the European Parliament is growing stronger each